

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SAB-02 /070 W
-----045402 171222Z /13

P R 151446Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7129
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PN, BR
SUBJECT: REACTION TO SENATE DEBATE ON PANAMA CANAL TREATIES

REF: STATE 95209

ACTION REQUESTED: SEE PARA 6

1. THERE HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENT AND LITTLE
STRAIGHT NEWS REPORTING ON THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES ISSUE
SINCE THE SENATE RATIFIED THE NEUTRALITY TREATY. THE ONE
EXCEPTION HAS BEEN SPECULATION APPEARING IN O ESTADO DE SAO
PAULO AND JORNAL DO BRASIL THAT THE DELAY IN AMBASSADOR-
DESIGNATE SAYRE'S CONFIRMATION BY THE SENATRE
IS LIKED TO THE CANAL TREATY VOTE.

2. JORNAL REPORTED APRIL 13 THAT THE SAYRE NOMINATION
WAS BEING HELD UP BY SENATOR JESSE HELMS, WHO
HAD WRITTEN TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACCUSING
AMBASSADOR SAYRE OF FRUSTRATING THE COURSE OF JUSTICE
BY WARNING PRESIDENT TORRIJOS THAT HIS BROTHER WOULD BE
ARRESTED BY US AGENTS FOR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. O ESTADO
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APRIL 14 SAID THAT ACCORDING TO CONGRESSIONAL
SOURCES, THE PROBABILITY THAT AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE
SAYRE WILL NOT BE CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE IS
OES RIO'S O GLOBO APRIL 14 THAT
REPRESENTSENATOR HELMSM ALL THREE
NEWSPAPERS REPORTED IN DETAIL ON THE HELSM AND MURPHY
ACCUSATIONS INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT'S REPLY TO

SENATOR HELMS OF MARCH 15 SUPPORTING AMBASSADOR-
DESIGNATE SAYRE'S ACTION.

4. BOTH THE JORNAL DO BRASIL AND O GLOBO REPORTED ON
THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL OF APRIL 13 CRITICIZING
THE SENATE FOR MODIFYING THE CANAL TREATIES AND NOTED
THAT FIVE DAYS BEFORE THE FINAL VOTE, THE WHITE HOUSE
HAS STILL NOT BEEN ABLE TO PERSUADE SENATOR DECONCINI TO
"WITHDRAW HIS AMENDMENT."

5. O GLOBO APRIL 14 ALSO REPORTED THE RELEASE OF A
TRIP REPORT BY SENATOR HOWARD BAKER ON HIS VISIT TO
FIVE COUNTRIES (INCLUDING BRAZIL EARLIER THIS YEAR,
SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT LATIN AMERICAN VIEWS ON THE
CANAL TREATIES. O GLOBO DETAILED COMMENTS IN THE
REPORT ABOUT THE SENATOR'S MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT
GEISEL AND PRIME MINISTER SILVEIRA. THE BAKER REPORT
ALLEGEDLY QUOTED SILVEIRA AS SAYING THE REJECTION
OF THE TREATIES BY THE SENATE "WOULD BE A SHOCK TO
HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS OWING TO THE GREAT HOPES
THE US CREATED". SILVEIRA ADDED, THAT BRAZIL,
BASED ON ITS LONG EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH TEN
NEIGHBORS, HAD COME TO BELIEVE THAT "THE NEGOTIATION
OF AN AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO FORCE AFTER 22 YEARS
REPRESENTS A POSTPONEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AND IS
NOT A SOLUTION; FOR THE PERSPECTIVES CERTAINLY
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WILL BE DIFFERENT IN THE YEAR 2000".

6. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE TEXT OF
SENATOR BAKER'S REPORT OF BRASIL VISIT, IF AVAILABLE.

JOHNSON

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